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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to assist parents help their children "get along" with others, and is based on the premise that the ability to relate well to others is essential to good mental health and success in the home, in the classroom, and on the job. The materials focus on the following topics: (1) the use of role play, questioning and responding activities for basic social skill development, including how to receive and give criticism, compliments and apologies; (2) strategies for sensitizing children to their feelings as well as the feelings and behaviors of those with whom they come in contact; and (3) techniques for developing children's sense of self worth and responsibility for their actions, and suggestions for coping with the actions of others. Two "feeling" words which are common expressions in Black idiomatic speech, "having an attitude" and "evil," are included as one way to help Black users of the booklet better understand their children. (Author)

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A SOCIAL SKILLS GUIDE FOR PARENTS
TO HELP CHILDREN COPE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Kathy Doughty
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PREFACE

This booklet was created for the use of parents to help their children "get along" with others. It was written in the belief that the ability to relate well to others is essential to good mental health, success in the home, in the classroom and on the job.

We believe that schools have a duty to help parents give support to their children and to steer them through important times of their lives. This is the spirit in which this booklet was written.

In this booklet, parents can explore, through the use of role play, questioning and responding activities, a variety of ways to help their children learn some basic social skills. These skills include how to receive and give criticism, compliments and apologies. This booklet also endeavors to give children an awareness of their own feelings and at the same time offers them some insights into the feelings and behaviors of those with whom they come in contact. Our hope is to thereby impart to children a sense of self worth, a sense of responsibility for their actions and some simple positive means of coping with the actions of others.

The activities were designed to promote amusement, conversation and learning. We hope it will be fun to use and of value to ALL children.

Jessie M. Gibson
and
Yvonne Jones

LANGUAGE

The way people communicate their feelings is often influenced by ethnic and environmental factors. Frequently, idiomatic expressions are used as a form of shorthand for a particular group's communication style.

In this booklet we have included two feeling words which are common expressions in Black idiomatic speech. We include them because it would be unrealistic to explain the concept of verbalizing feelings and omit these two important ethnic feeling words. The expression "having an attitude" as it is used in this guide denotes showing displeasure or reacting to a situation in a hostile way. To many of the parents and children for whom this book was designed, this is an acceptable way of describing this feeling; while in standard American speech, attitude implies a whole range of feeling expressions.

Another example is the word "evil" when used to describe a feeling. In this booklet it means feeling irritable, peevish or moody. In contrast, the standard English usage is sinful, sinister or malevolent.

While we believe it is important for all people to know and understand standard American usage, we have included these two widely used ethnic phrases to help parents understand their children better.

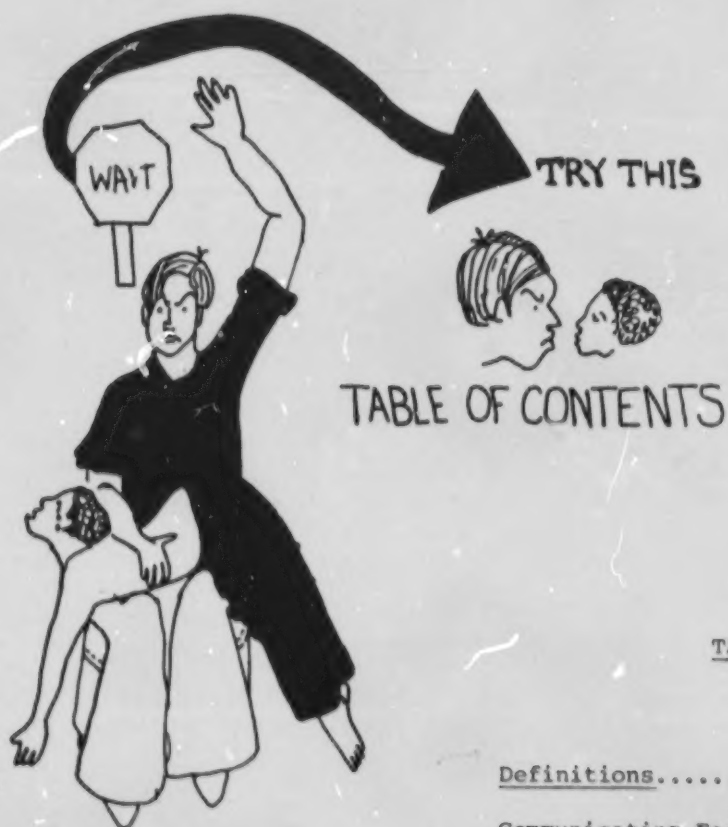


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DEFINITIONS

- Apologizing - openly expressing regret for something said or done to cause another pain or discomfort.
- Criticizing - giving another person your observations and opinions (usually negative) about the way they look, or something they say or do.
- Complimenting - giving someone your favorable observations about the way they look or something they said or did.
- Social Skills - everyday things we do or say that help us interact with people in a positive way.
- Influencing Behavior - using social skills to satisfy another person's need to be recognized. Small talk, complimenting, eye contact, and criticizing are all examples of influencing behavior.

CHILD:

In this booklet when we refer to child or children, we do not necessarily mean it to reflect age.

To parents, their children are always their children whether they are 2 hours old or 62 years.



COMMUNICATING FEELINGS

Using Role Play

Role playing is pretending or play acting a situation in order to get information.

Role play can be a useful way to teach your child social skills.



Some useful information you and your child might want to find out from role playing is:

1. How it feels to be in another person's shoes,

2. How you act under stress,



3. How your actions are viewed by others.

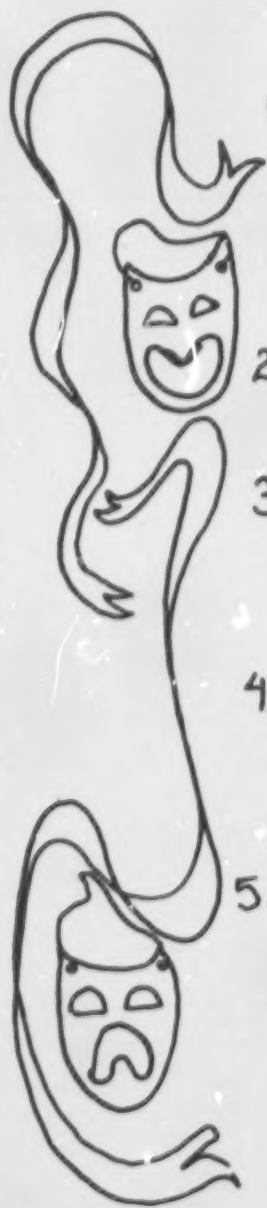
Look at her!
She thinks she's cute!!

What a lovely day



Role Play Activity I

The activities below are introductory examples of role playing. The whole family can do these activities together.



1. Everybody imagines that they are getting smaller in size. Role play yourself shrinking.
2. Role play walking across hot sand.
3. Role play being an inflated balloon in a parade. Talk as if you were the balloon.
4. Be a favorite tv actor or actress. Role play a scene.
5. Role play a basketball player dribbling.

Role Play Activity II

1. Ask your child to role play a job interview. you be the interviewer.

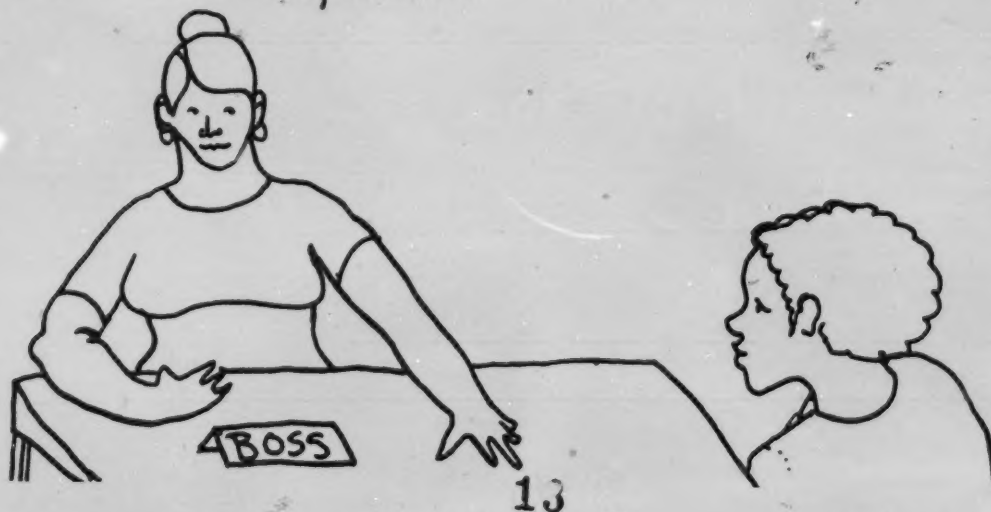
2. Some things to look for during the interview

- a) nervousness - stammering
- b) lots of Ah... Ah... Ah... you know, you know.....
- c) shaky voice, hand movement
- d) not looking the interviewer in the eye

3. Switch places, you play your child and imitate his/her actions. Let your child play the interviewer.

4. After the role play you and your child discuss the interview.

5. Ask your child to practice again until he/she feels more confident.



Role Play Activity ^{III}

1. Have your child practice his / her next oral class presentation.
2. Let the whole family play the class.
3. After the role play, have the family members comment on the presentation for style of delivery and interest of the subject.
4. Make sure the comments the family gives are helpful, specific observations, not generalized statements.

5. Example of helpful comment:

"You kept your head down and kept moving from side to side."

Example of generalized statements:

"you acted nervous."

"you acted funny."



Dear Parents :



1. In order to be able to practice good social skills your children must be aware of

Feelings * * * *

their own feelings and other people's.

2. They need to recognize and be able to find words to express those feelings.



Recognizing Feelings

F

Feelings can be expressed
by the way we look
what we say
how we act.

I

n order to read another person's
feelings we have to use our:

eyes to see
ears to listen
brain to think.



Feelings

People tell us how they feel:

by crying,
frowning,
laughing,
looking sad,
looking happy.....

and lots of other things

by moving,
away from us,
toward us,
touching us,
not touching us,
looking away.....

and lots of other things

by stomping,
giggling,
jumping,
being quiet,
being noisy

and lots of other things.

Feeling Words

Having a variety of words to express how you feel is important. It helps other people to better understand what is going on inside you. It also helps you to "get out" more of what is pent up inside of you.

SEE NEXT PAGE
FOR FEELING WORDS...

HAPPY WORDS

CARED FOR
CONTENT
DELIGHTED
ECSTATIC
EXUBERANT
EXULTANT

THRILLED

FEELING "BOSS"
GLAD
GOOD
HIGH
JUBILANT
O.K., FINE

SAD WORDS

AWFUL
BLUE
DEPRESSED
DISHEARTENED
DOWN

LOW
MISERABLE
REJECTED
SAD
UNHAPPY

ANGER WORDS

AGGRAVATED
ANNOYED
BOTHERED
BUGGED
DISGUSTED
EMBARRASSED
EVIL

FURIOUS
HAVE AN ATTITUDE
IRRITATED
MAD
PERTURBED
RESENTFUL
TICKED OFF

FEAR WORDS

DISTRAUGHT
DISTRESSED
FEARFUL
FRANTIC
FRIGHTENED
HORRIFIED

LONELY
PANICKED
SCARED
SHAKY
SHOCKED
UNEASY

VULNERABLE

CONFUSION AND DISCOMFORT WORDS

ANXIOUS
AWKWARD
EDGY
FLUSTERED
GOING THROUGH CHANGES
HUNG UP
ILL AT EASE
LEFT HANGING
LOST
MESSED UP
MIXED UP
NERVOUS
NOT WITH IT

OUT OF IT
OUT OF PLACE
PUZZLED
SHOOK UP
STUCK
TENSE
TIMID
UNCOMFORTABLE
UNINFORMED
UNSURE
UPSET
UPTIGHT
WEIRD

To find out for sure Why a person is feeling a certain way, we might have to ask for more information. Sometimes this is important to do in order to "check out" their reasons for acting a certain way towards us.

Checking Out

Are you
Angry with
me?



-14-

No, it's just
that the stupid
washing machine
broke down.



Feeling Activity I

(identifying feelings)

* for ages 4 years to 10 years.

Ask your child to look at the drawings on the next page. Write below what he/she thinks each person in the drawing is feeling.

Drawing #1. _____

Drawing #2. _____

Drawing #3. _____

* for older children

Drawing #1

Drawing #2

Drawing #3

Feeling Drawings

1.



2.



3.



Feeling Activity II

(INTERVIEWING)

Parent: Interview each of your children. Let one of your children interview you. This activity can be done with everyone present. The answers can be written, spoken, or acted out.

Question #1

How do people know when you're angry?

How do you look?

What do you say?

How do you behave?

Question #2

How do people know when you are pleased?

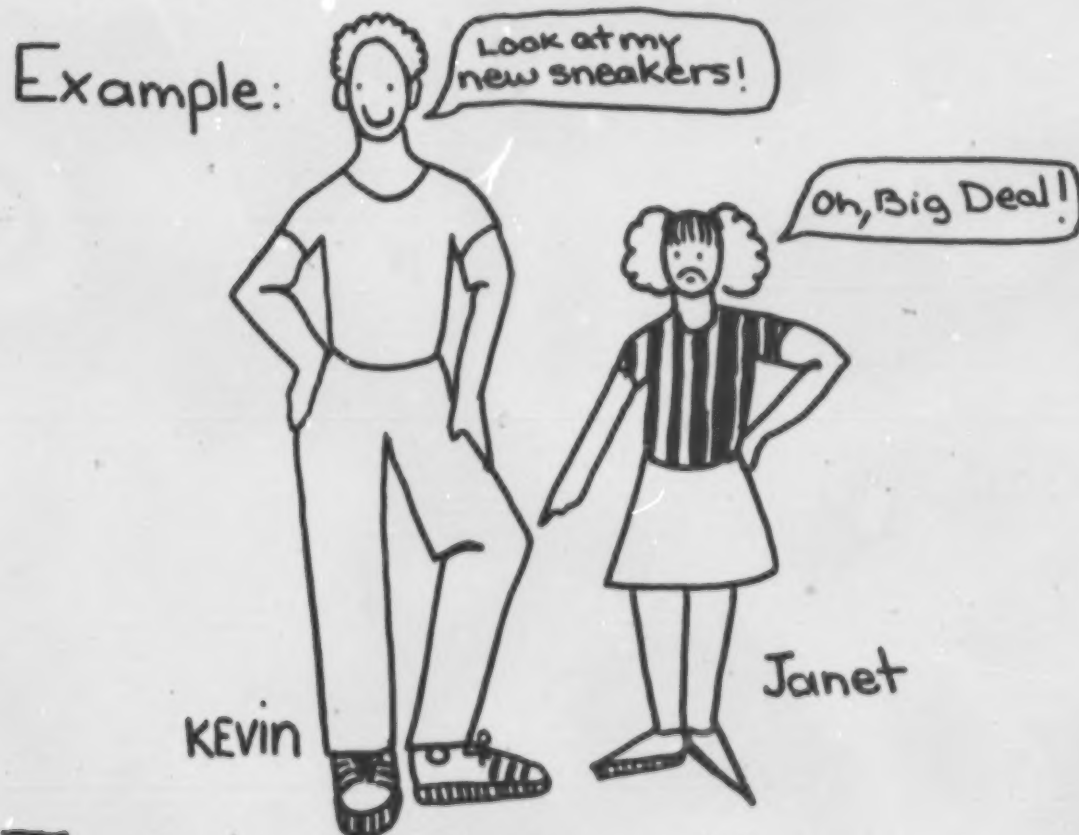
How do you look?

What do you say?

How do you behave?

Attitude :

The way a person reacts to something somebody says or does that makes them feel bad about themselves.



Janet has an "attitude" because she likes Kevin's sneakers but she feels bad because she's wearing old ones.

Attitudes

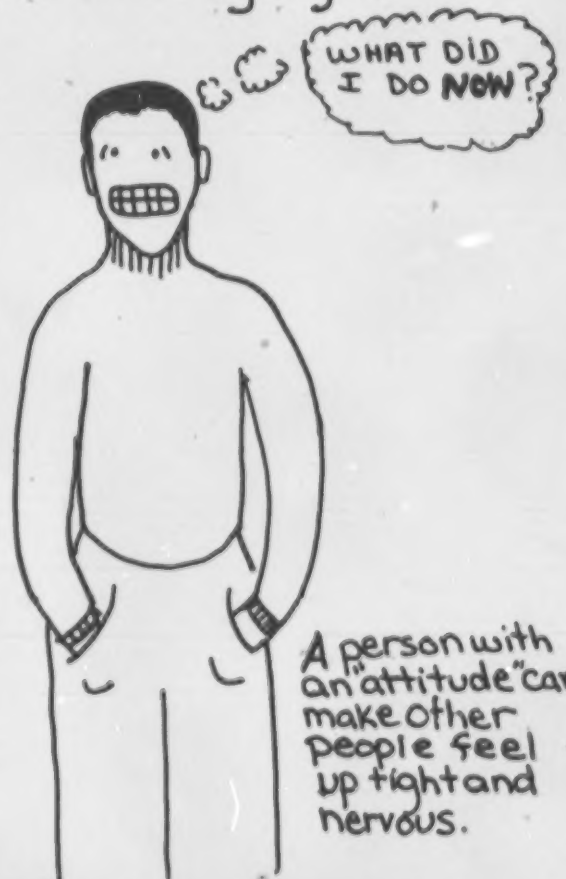
A person with an "attitude" is usually hostile and hard to handle. You can usually spot a person with an "attitude" by his or her body language.

body language signs:

- a) eye rolling
- b) pouting
- c) looking away, avoiding eyes



An attitude.



A person with an "attitude" can make other people feel up tight and nervous.

Attitudes

Some facts about attitudes.....

Anybody can get an "attitude"; teachers, parents, boys, girls, men and women.



Some feelings behind getting an attitude are:

jealousy	frustration	hurt
uneasiness	embarrassment	anger

The inability of people to express strong feelings in a way that other people are willing to hear, can make people take on an "attitude."

Coping with Attitudes

Activity I

(Communicating feelings)

PARENT: Pretend the person who caused you to have an "attitude" is sitting in a chair next to you.



1. Tell the imaginary person why you have an "attitude" toward them.
2. Then, tell them what they could do or say that would make you feel better.

CHILD: Pretend some person who has caused you to have an "attitude" is sitting in a chair next to you and do the same thing as above.



Joe, I hate it when you tease me about Kevin in front of everybody.

Keep trying different statements.

Coping with Attitudes

Activity II

(communicating feelings)



Parent and child together

1. Talk about a time when you had an "attitude".
2. What were some of the feelings that brought on your "attitude"? Name as many of these feelings as you can.
3. How do you think someone could have made you feel better?
4. What could you do or say to make yourself feel better?

Evil:

This word means acting or feeling mean. Sometimes people feel "evil" because they are sleepy, don't feel well, are just not in a good mood, or for other reasons.

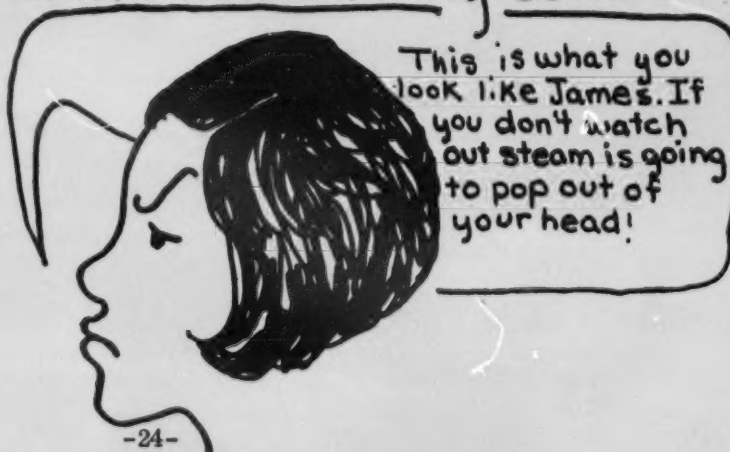


Handling **E**vil



Moods
activity I:
(communicating feelings)

PARENT: Try to say or do something to
get the child out of the "evil" mood.
Mimic and make a funny comment.



This is what you
look like James. If
you don't watch
out steam is going
to pop out of
your head!

Handling Evil

Moods activity II (communicating feelings)



PARENT: Share with your child things you could say to yourself and do yourself to get out of your "evil" mood.



CHILD: Share with your parent things you could say to yourself and do yourself to get out of your "evil" mood.



LEARNING SPECIFIC SOCIAL SKILLS

Giving Compliments

Compliments make people feel good about themselves and you too!!

Basic Rules About Giving Compliments

You may compliment people for different reasons:

1. The things they have.
2. The things they do.
3. Their looks.
4. Their personalities.



Giving ompliments

The important thing is to be sincere.
Don't say it if you don't mean it.

Look the person in the eye when
complimenting.



Say a couple of things about whatever
you are complimenting the person about.



GIVING



Compliments

continued...

Sometimes,
end with a question. This helps to
keep the conversation going.



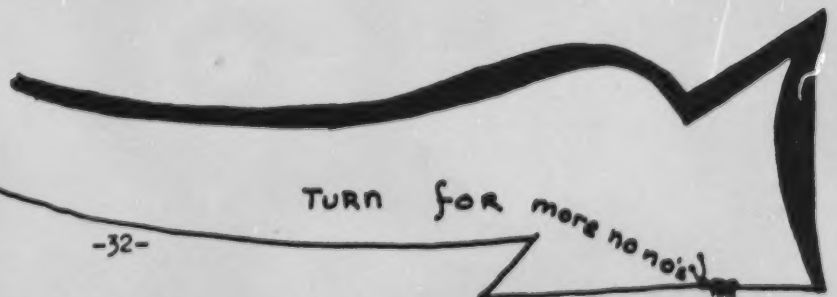
Some "NO NO's" about Giving Compliments

1. Don't say it if you don't mean it.

2. Don't give a compliment and then a put down.



3. Don't give a compliment and then ask a favor.



TURN FOR more no no's

"NO NO"s continued . . .

4. Don't give a lot of compliments at the same time.



5. Don't give one person a compliment that makes others look bad.



Complimenting Activity

1. Each family member practice giving each other compliments. Try all the different kinds: something someone has, does, or the way he/she looks or behaves. Remember the rules for giving compliments when you do them.
2. When you are finished and everyone has had a chance, each person is to answer these questions:

@Did you feel sincere doing it?

☐ yes ☐ no

QDid you look the person in the eye?

☐ yes ☐ no

©Could you think of a couple of things to say along with the compliment that made sense?

☐ yes ☐ no

Some Tips For Your Child About

Receiving Compliments

Giving compliments can be easier than receiving them. If you sometimes feel embarrassed when complimented, remember these little tips:

1. Look your complimenter in the eye.
2. Say, "Thank You" with a smile.
3. Don't look down at the floor.
4. Don't put yourself down; example ("It wasn't anything, anybody can do what I did.")
5. Say something about the compliment you were given.
6. Do not feel obligated to give the person a compliment in return.

Receiving Compliments activity

Find a partner: Brother, sister, or parent. One person will be "A" one person should be "B".

A = person giving compliment

B = person receiving compliment

"A" should think of something nice about "B". It could be something he/she has, something he/she can do - something you like about the way "B" looks or acts. Give "B" a compliment (remember the rules). "B", you receive the compliment (remember the rules). Okay - now - switch around and "B", you give "A" a compliment at this time. After you finish talk about it; how comfortable you felt, what would have made it easier. Did you follow the rules? If not, why not?

CRITICISM

Criticism is sometimes used

1. to get people to do what we want them to do,

2. to show our annoyance when people don't do what we want them to do,

3. to help change a person's behavior towards us and others,

and,

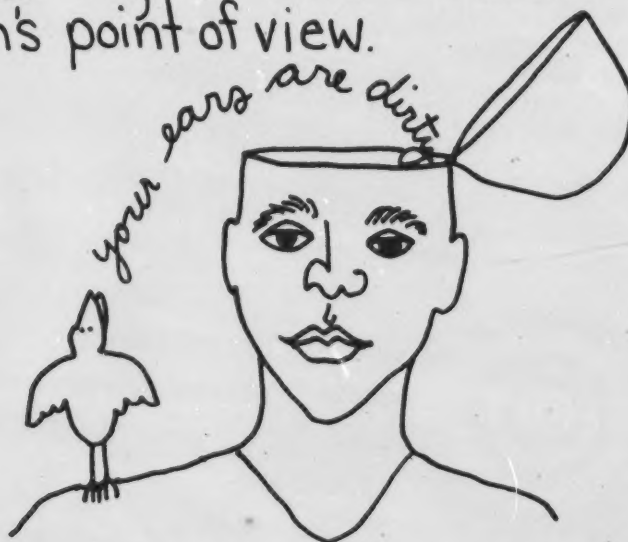
4. to change another person's ideas.

CRITICISM

Is a **TWO-WAY** process.



Everybody must learn to TAKE as well as GIVE criticism. Criticism can help you to improve yourself. Listen to criticism with an open mind. Try to view criticism from the other person's point of view.



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CRITICISM

The Effectiveness of Criticism is based on:

to **Whom** you say it,

How you say it,

a) TONE
b) BODY LANGUAGE

and,

What you say,
THE LANGUAGE YOU USE.

CRITICISM

How to go about it:

1. Use a cautious approach; the person might feel bad already.
2. Keep in mind that you might be wrong.
3. Hear the person's point of view.
4. Make sure your criticism is helpful.
5. Only criticize one thing at a time.
6. Criticize in private; don't compare the person with other individuals.

CRITICISM

Pointers to keep in mind:

When you criticize keep in mind that you and the person are trying to solve a problem.

- timing is important, don't wait too long.
- make sure the thing being criticized is something the person can change if they would like to.



CRITICISM

Let criticism be helpful
information. Make specific
comments not vague, general
statements.

VOGUE, GENERAL

Jr., you're
eating Like a
Pig!



HELPFUL

Jr., please get your
elbows off the table
and eat slowly.



CRITICISM

ACTIVITY I

(Communicating feelings)

Sometimes between parent and child there are small annoyances.

CHILD: Think of something that your Mom or Dad does that annoys you. Let Mom or Dad know how you feel and why you are feeling that way. Use the formula below:

THE FEELING FORMULA

When you _____,
(describe the annoying behavior)

I feel _____,
(what you are feeling)

because _____.
(why the behavior annoys you)

Example of an "I FEEL MESSAGE"



CRITICISM

ACTIVITY II

- Remember the ideas that were used for role playing. Keep them in mind to do the following activities. Also, remember to use the "I feel message formula" given in activity one.

Situations: for parent and child role play

1. You are eating dinner and someone spills milk for the second time all over the floor. How would you respond?
2. Someone is helping you with your homework and tells you that you are lazy. What do you say?
You are helping someone else with their homework and they are not cooperating. What do you say?
3. Let the family role play students fighting in a class. Keep in mind the useful ways to give and receive criticism. Everyone is to make a statement to one other person. Use the formula.

CRITICISM

ACTIVITY II

(ROLE PLAY)

This is a game.

ROLES: magician, other people

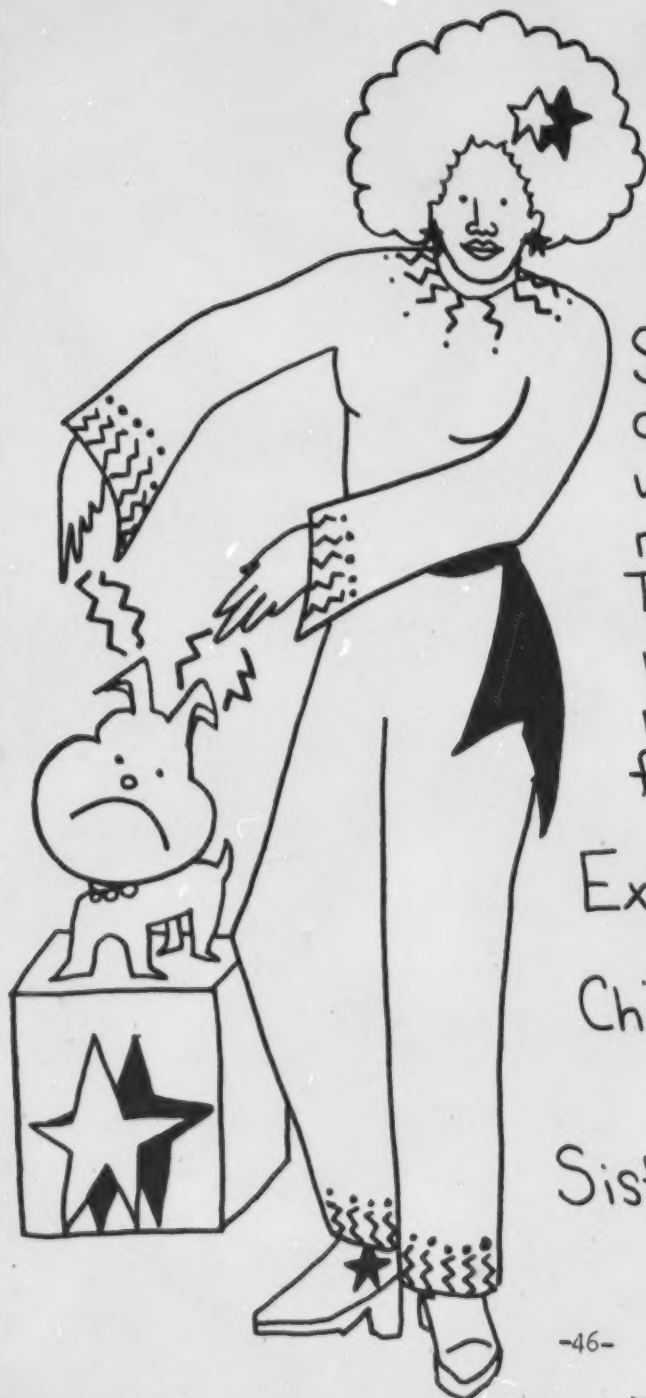
One person is a magician.

She uses her magic to change other people into whatever she wants them to become. Other family members accept their new roles. They have to act out the roles the magician gives them. Then, they may tell the magician how they feel about playing their role.

Example:

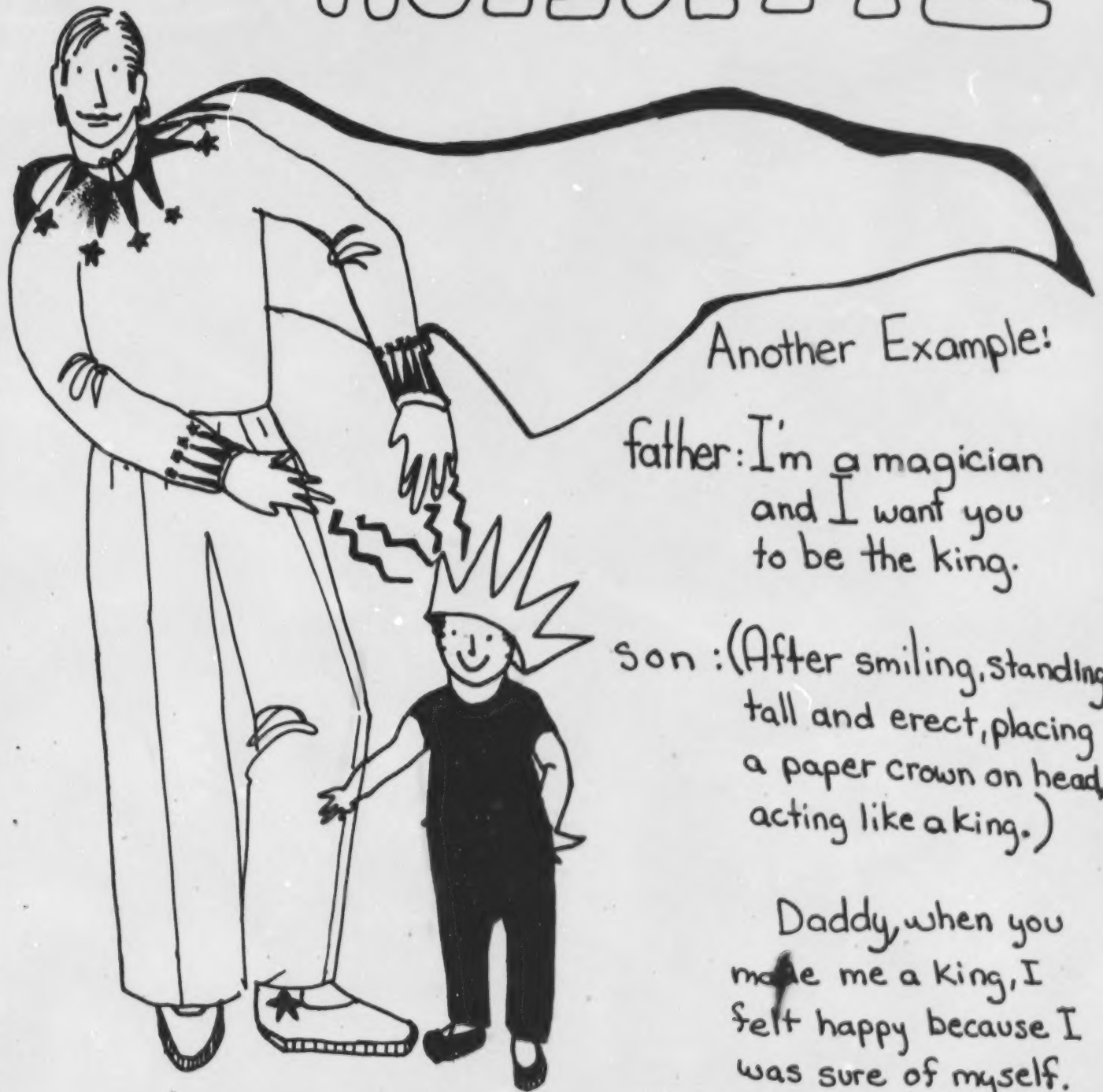
Child: I'm a magician and I want you to be a dog.

Sister: (after barking and sniffing)
Deborah, when you made me into a dog, I felt dumb. I hate to do silly things.



CRITICISM

ACTIVITY II



Another Example:

father: I'm a magician
and I want you
to be the king.

son: (After smiling, standing
tall and erect, placing
a paper crown on head,
acting like a king.)

Daddy, when you
made me a king, I
felt happy because I
was sure of myself.

RECEIVING CRITICISM

If the criticism is correct, be grateful and follow through on it.

If you feel the criticism is too strong;

1. Ask yourself: why would he/she say that?

and if that doesn't work

2. Ask the person why did he/she say....?

3. Tell the person how you feel.



Apologizing

Apologizing involves:

- admitting mistakes

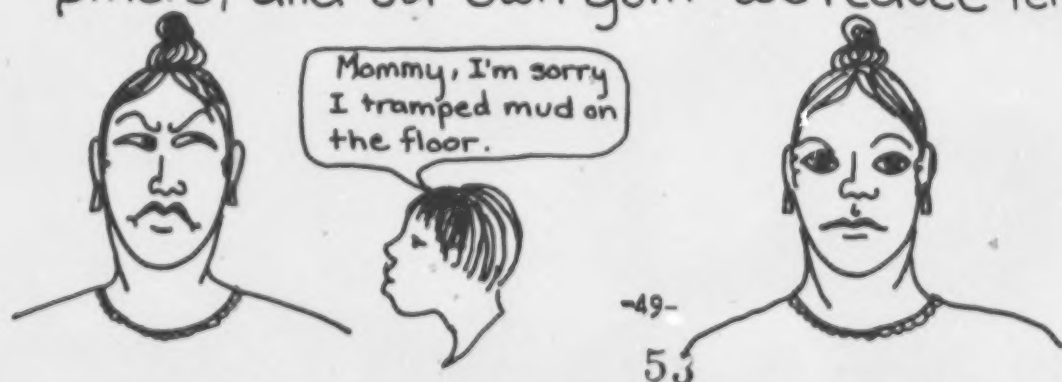
- taking a risk

- caring about the other person and the relationship

- showing you are big enough to admit to mistakes

- acting in a positive way to increase respect.

By apologizing we may reduce the anger of others, and our own guilt - we reduce tension.



Apologizing

Why is apologizing difficult?

1. It's hard to admit you are wrong to yourself and others.
2. You might feel that if you confess guilt, others might dislike you or punish you.
3. The right words might not come easy.
4. You risk humiliation from the other person.
5. Sometimes you are not even aware that you should apologize.

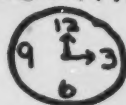


Apologizing

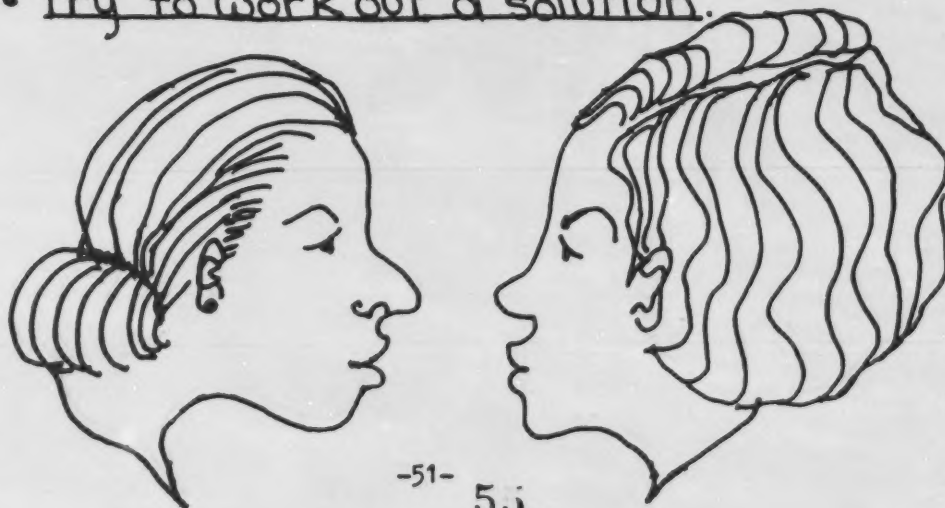
Rules for giving an apology

Do:

- choose the "right" time. Wait until the person has calmed down. Be able to discuss things. Don't wait too long.



- relax. Look the person in the eye. Speak clearly and calmly.
- take responsibility for your mistakes.
- listen to the other person's view.
- try to work out a solution.



Apologizing

Rules for giving an apology

Don't:

- hold your head down and speak in a low voice without looking the other person in the eye.
- accuse the other person of being to blame.
- refer to mistakes the other person has made in the past.
- tell others you are sorry - go directly to the person involved.
- use gifts to apologize; use words.
- apologize for things you didn't do.
- apologize if you don't mean it.

Apologizing

Some pointers on Giving apologies



1. Use friendly and approachable body language.



2. Speak softly but clearly; no mumbling.

3. Show your feelings - it's normal to be embarrassed and confused.

4. Give your apology in person but....

Sometimes the other person is too **ANGRY** to listen so.....

try writing first.



Apologizing Activity I

(giving apologies)

A child is running in the school yard and bumps into another child who falls down. Imagine that you are the running child. What do you do and say?

first _____

Second _____

third _____

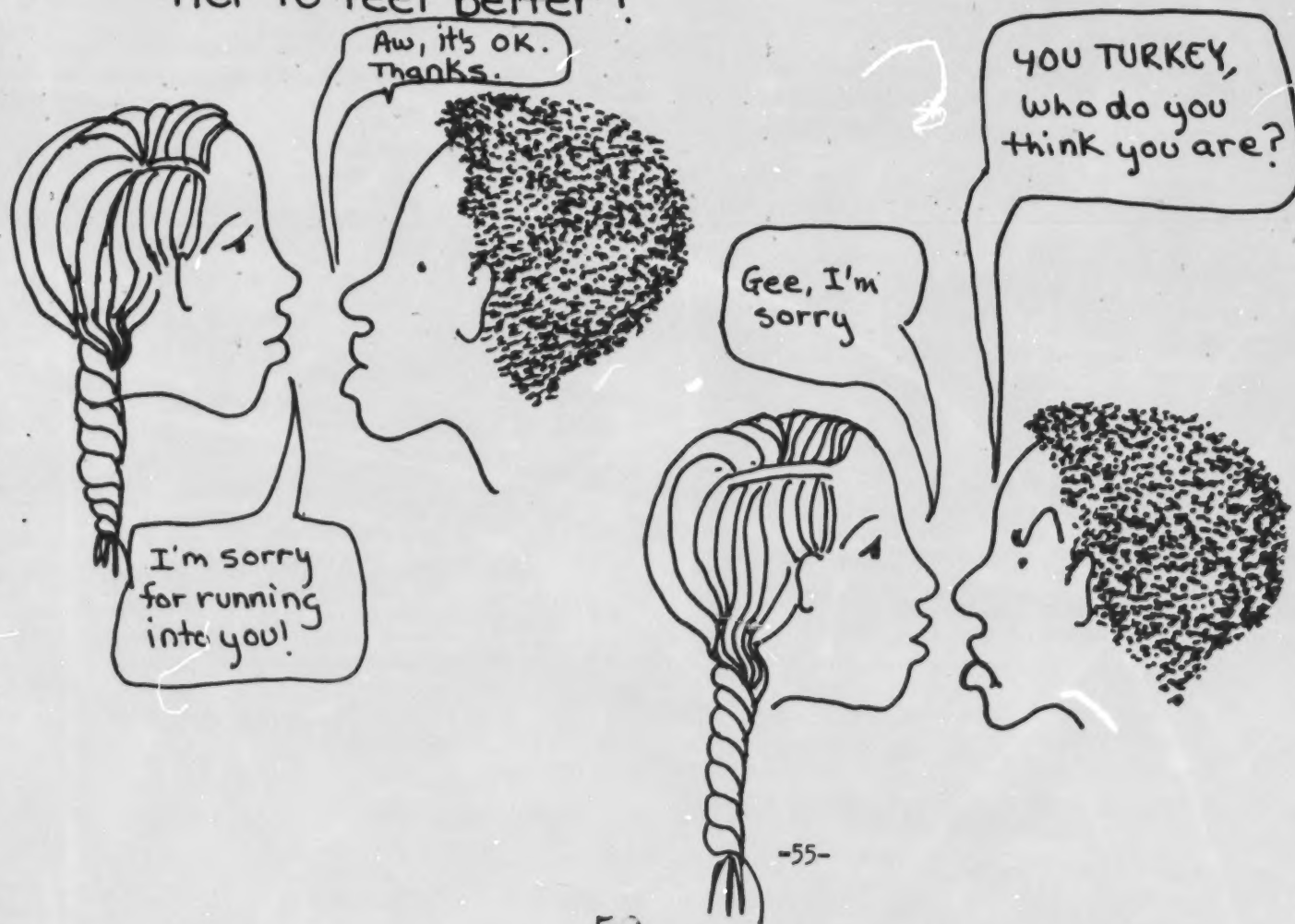
(see answers Below)



Apologizing Activity II

(role play)

With another family member, role play the school yard situation. Actually go through the 3 steps listed in the answer. How do you feel about what you did? How does the person who was knocked down feel? If the person is angry what could you do or say to make him or her to feel better?



Apologizing Activity III ✓

(discussion)

As a family discuss some situations like the school yard incident that might happen in daily life.



Make a list of incidents

Apologizing Activity IV

(role play)

With family members, use the list of incidents from activity III. Now practice with each other, giving an apology for each incident.

Example:

Child creates extra work for older brother or sister by pulling out toys and scattering them. Child apologizes for his/her action.

What should he do or say?



Apologizing Activity V

(discussion and role play)

Mother is busy fixing dinner. She wants Bobby to go to the store for her instead of playing. Bobby stomps and begins to cry. He is sent to his room. Later Bobby comes downstairs.

Have a family discussion. Who is to blame? Who should apologize? Mother? Bobby? How could this be solved so that they would both feel o.k.?

After the discussion, role play this situation. Someone play mother. Someone play Bobby.



Receiving Apologies

Do's

- Listen.
- Thank the other person.
- Express your feelings.
- Try to work on a solution.

Don't

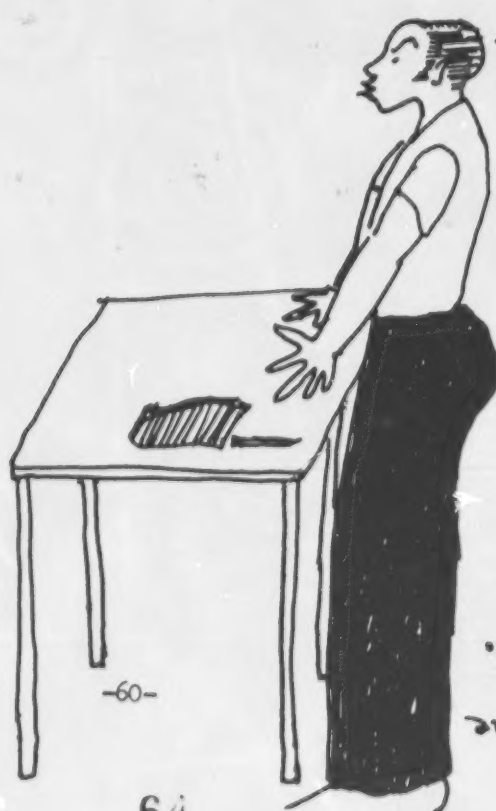
- Look away from the person.
- Say "forget it" if you don't mean it.
- Start an argument or make nasty comments.
- Make the person feel even more guilty.
- Keep reminding the person of what they did.

Receiving Apologies Activity I

(ROLE PLAY)

Someone has picked up your books by mistake. The person returns with them and apologizes to you. How would you respond?

First _____
Second _____
Third _____



1. Listen.
2. Thank the person for the apology.
3. Express your feelings.

Receiving Apologies Activity II

(ROLE PLAY)

With a family member, role play the misplaced book incident from Activity I. Actually go through the 3 steps listed in the answers. How do you feel about receiving the apology? How did you make the person who apologized feel? If you still feel angry or upset, try the "I feel message" so you won't have an "attitude".



INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR

Influencing the behavior of others

Everybody needs to be recognized and noticed. Giving attention and getting attention are the ways we satisfy these needs in ourselves and others.



As a parent you can use positive attention giving tactics to reinforce behavior you like in your child. Let the child know you notice behavior that meets with your approval.



Dad is influencing his son's behavior by giving him positive attention.

Sometimes the need to get attention provokes children into doing things that get them in trouble.



Dad could have used positive attention giving behavior.



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and perhaps looked at his ballgame in peace.

Dear Parents:



Learning to give and to get attention are important social skills.

In this guide we strongly recommend that children use positive behavior to get attention.

However, there are behaviors that permit children to handle frustrating problems with adults without being disrespectful or physically aggressive.

Explain Influencing Behavior



Your children are behavior engineers.

They have the power to influence the way
the teacher acts

BY

1. rewarding the teacher with positive attention
getting and giving behaviors,

or

2. sending up distress signals to the teacher
when they are having problems in class.

Positive ways to get attention and to show attention to others

1. Eye contact

2. Smiling



3. Showing Recognition (Hello and other friendly remarks)

4. Making **Small Talk**

5. Listening and paying attention

6. Giving Compliments



Some Tips to give your

child about demonstrating positive behavior in the classroom.

1. Listen!
2. Sit up straight!
3. Look the teacher in the eye
 - a) when you talk to her/him.
 - b) when he/she talks to you.
4. Smile.
5. Say "Hello", "Have a good day!", or other pleasantries.
6. Learn how to "Small Talk." (see page 66)
7. Give compliments.
8. Let your teacher know how you feel,
 - a) when the teacher does something you like
 - b) when the teacher does something you dislike.(see the "I Feel" formula on page)



1. Ignoring the person.
2. Frowning at the person.
3. Avoiding the person's eyes when they speak to you or you speak to them.
4. Avoiding the usual friendly talk with the person.
5. Refraining from doing small favors for the person.

TEASING, using abusive language and disruptive behaviors are also distress signals. They are not acceptable social skills practices.

Some topics for

Small Talk

1. Do you like what you do for a living?
2. If not, what would you rather do?
3. What do you do for fun?
4. How many children do you have?
5. How old are they?
6. Do any of your children want to be what you are?
7. Did you like school when you were little?
8. Do you remember your favorite teacher?

Practicing Behavior activity I

(interviewing)

Small Talk

1. Ask your child to pick a couple of questions and interview at least 2 adults.
2. Make sure the questions are appropriate for the person your child is going to interview.
3. Remind your child that the object of the interview is to keep an interesting conversation going.

Practicing Behavior activity III



Problems with Other Students

Roleplay an actual situation which typifies the kind of problem your child might have with another student.

1. Make a list of behaviors of students that turns your child off.

2. What are some things your child could do to change those behaviors?

see next page →

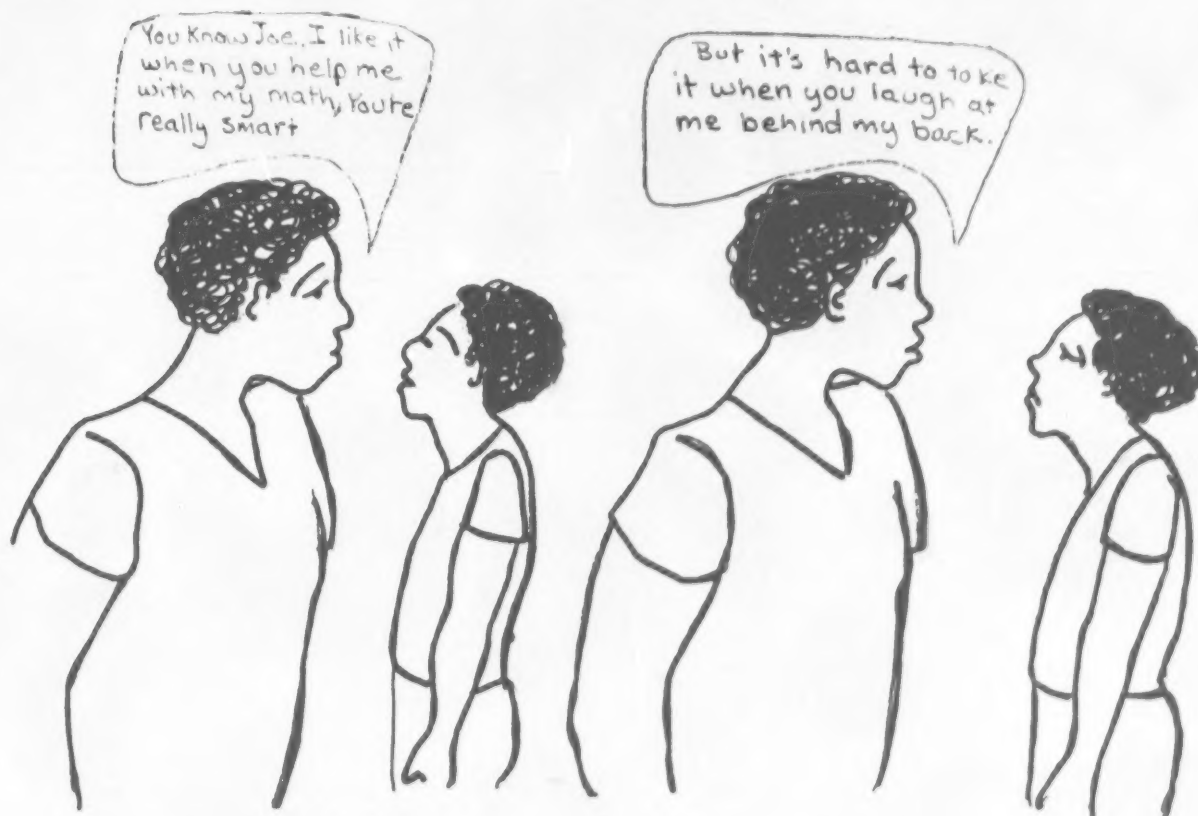
Example

PROBLEM: BEING PUT DOWN BY A FRIEND WHO IS ON A "SHOW-OFF".

THE SITUATION: Steve and Joe are friends. Steve is sought after for his ability to play basketball and Joe is always included on the team because he is a friend of Steve's. Joe helps Steve with his math but is always bragging about it and belittling Steve to others.

HOW STEVE COULD INFLUENCE JOE'S BEHAVIOR

1. TALK TO JOE ALONE.
2. TELL JOE WHAT HE DOES THAT ANGERS HIM.
3. TELL JOE SOMETHING THAT HE DOES THAT HE LIKES.
4. DO NOT THREATEN TO LEAVE JOE OUT OF THE GAMES.
5. DO NOT CALL JOE NAMES OR PHYSICALLY ATTACK HIM.



Practicing Behavior activity II



(ROLE PLAY)

Problems with Teacher

Roleplay an actual classroom situation with your child which could give him/her problems.

1. Make a list of actions of teachers that turn your child off.
2. What are some things your child could do to change those actions?

see next page for example

Example...



CONCLUSION

In this booklet, we have endeavored to put into everyday language many of the ideas, concepts and skills that are recommended and practiced by professionals in the area of social communication.

We have defined some common ethnic expressions such as "checking out" feelings, "having an attitude", "feeling evil", in order that those who hear them and those who use them have a better understanding of the meaning behind such words.

Some of the interpersonal communication skills presented were role play, verbalizing feelings, behavior engineering, etc.... Our hope is that parents will be able to help their children be more sensitive to the feelings of others, more confident in expressing their own feelings, more skillful in coping with the behavior of others, and more responsible for their own behavior.

We believe that people who have worked together on a project such as this, should share how they feel once the task is over. Perhaps as a family you might want to ask yourselves the following questions:

1. How did you feel about working with this booklet?
2. What things do you think will be of use to you in the future?
3. Do you think you learned anything new or different about each other?

Even though you have reached the end of this booklet, we sincerely hope you will continue to practice the ideas, concepts and skills which you feel will be of benefit to you and your children.

Jessie M. Gibson & Yvonne Jones

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